DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2012-2013

NOVA SCOTIA
Community Services

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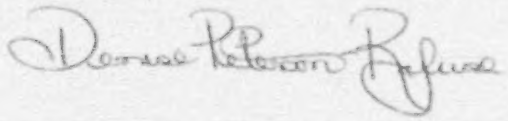
1.0 Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Community Services for the year ended March 31, 2013 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the *Department of Community Services' Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year 2012-2013*. The reporting of the Department of Community Services outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Community Services' management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of Community Services' management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the *Department of Community Services' 2012-2013 Statement of Mandate*.



Denise Peterson-Rafuse
Minister, Department of Community Services

Dave Ryan
A/Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

2.0 Message from the Minister

On behalf of the Department of Community Services, we are pleased to present the 2012-2013 Accountability Report.

In 2012-2013 the department provided services to almost 200,000 Nova Scotians. These services took many forms and contributed to better futures for the province's youth, families and their children, persons with disabilities, and communities.

As anticipated, 2012-2013 was an exciting year.

We were once again able to make significant investments in financial supports continuing our plan to make life better for Nova Scotia's families. We expanded the eligibility for the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, enabling an additional 2,000 families to qualify, and increased the benefits for approximately 40,000 children. The Poverty Reduction Credit was increased by 20 percent helping some 14,000 of our most vulnerable citizens. And we increased the income assistance personal allowance rate by $9-per-month, on top of the previous year's $15-per-month increase, the largest boost in a decade.

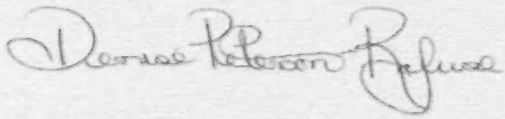
The most recent Statistics Canada numbers show the province is heading in the right direction. In 2011, the number of people with low incomes dropped by more than 7,000 to 64,000, a decrease of 10 per cent over 2010. This means that about seven per cent of the population is considered to be living in poverty. This is the lowest percentage of low-income Nova Scotians on record. However, there is always more that can be done and we remain committed to improving lives of Nova Scotians most in need.

In 2012-2013, we undertook three major consultations to hear directly from Nova Scotians about their needs and aspirations for their children, for those living with disabilities, and for secure and affordable housing in their communities. These consultations served us well, informing the development of a new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Nova Scotia's first Housing Strategy, and will be used to guide improvements in services for our seniors and persons with disabilities.

More children now have a forever family as a result of our Adoption Strategy. In 2012-2013, another 122 children in care were adopted.

And in 2012-2013, the Department made a commitment to becoming a restorative organization, beginning with the enhancement of relationships between employees.

Regards,



Denise Peterson-Rafuse
Minister, Department of Community Services

3.0 Introduction

The annual Accountability Report for the Department of Community Services reports on the progress achieved by the department towards the outcomes and financial targets established in the *2012-2013 Statement of Mandate*. The *2012-2013 Statement of Mandate* is available on Community Services' website at http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/department/Publications.html.

4.0 Accomplishments

Described below are the Department's accomplishments against the priorities identified in the *2012-2013 Statement of Mandate*.

Helping People Make Ends Meet

Employment Support and Income Assistance Model

The focus of the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) transformation project is to implement a model that maximizes client independence and self-reliance.

Research indicates that employment provides the best opportunity for individuals to attain self-sufficiency and exit from poverty. In 2012-2013, to help facilitate movement towards employment, the department has:

- Introduced a new screening process to better identify individuals who have strong potential for employment. As a result, more clients have attached to the labour market and/or have access the supports they need to help them prepare for employment
- Partnered with Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) to pilot an employment service model that connects job ready clients to external service providers for job search support
- Piloted a new intervention program for ESIA clients who have health related issues that have prevented them from securing employment. The pilot was introduced in the Halifax area and served participants having varying degrees of employment history. Results to date indicate, 20 percent of participants have gained full or part-time employment, furthered their education/training, or participated in a structured activity.

Income Support Programs

In 2012-2013, the department invested in a variety of income support programs to help address the challenges low-income Nova Scotians face on a daily basis. More specifically, the department has:

- Invested in the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, enabling an additional 2,000 families to qualify, and provided over 20,000 families an average annual increase of at least 5 percent; the majority of families have seen an increase of 9 percent, or more
- Increased the Income Assistance personal allowance rate by $9-per-month. This comes on top of the previous year's $15-per-month increase, the largest boost in a decade
- Increased the Poverty Reduction Credit by 20 percent, to $250 annually, helping some 14,000 Nova Scotians who are among the most vulnerable.

Improved Access to Program Information

In 2012-2013, the department worked closely with *2-1-1 Nova Scotia* to ensure the department's extensive network of social programs and supports were included in the new province-wide information and referral system. This involved providing detailed information on over 45 programs and 58 sites, as well connecting 2-1-1 staff with over 340 service providers and grant-based agencies funded by the department.

For the first time, information on every social service and program available in Nova Scotia is assembled in one, easy-to-access and easy-to-search location. This means Nova Scotians can access more than 3,000 government, community and social programs, just by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting the 2-1-1 website.

In the first few months of operation, there have been almost 600 referrals to Community Service programs, which is over 10 percent of the total referrals since the launch in February 2013.

Better Healthcare for You and Your Family

Continuing Care/ Services for Persons for Disabilities Strategy

In 2012-2013, the Departments of Health and Wellness and Community Services hosted a series of targeted meetings across the province to gather input on reshaping the system of care for the 40,000 Nova Scotians who are aging, or have mental, physical, or intellectual disabilities. These discussions provided an opportunity for government and stakeholders to collaborate on solutions to make the system more flexible and responsive, and to make it easier for clients and

families to access the services they need, when they need them. Over 650 service providers, advocacy groups, caregivers, individuals and families participated in the process.

The results of the community engagement process will help inform an action plan to better support seniors and persons with disabilities to live independently in their communities, regardless of their health status or level of ability.

In 2012-2013, the department also:

- Invested $900,000 to expand the Independent Living and Alternative Family Support programs for the second year, enabling 28 more persons with disabilities to remain living in their homes and communities longer
- Introduced a new program called Enhanced Family Support for Children (EFSC). This program assists families to support their child at home when their child's care and support needs are considered extremely challenging and they require comprehensive, highly structured and skilled forms of support and intervention.

Supportive Housing

The right housing options can enable Nova Scotia's seniors to remain in their own homes, and give persons with disabilities greater independence and choice. Housing is also the first step for someone suffering from addiction or mental illness to rebuild their lives. As such, supportive housing is not a one-size-fits-all solution. A full range of housing options and supports is required to meet the varied needs of Nova Scotians.

In 2012-2013, the department has:

- Invested in 151 new affordable rental units in areas with a demonstrated need for affordable rental housing, located in Bridgewater, Amherst, Liverpool, Halifax, Kentville, Sydney, Windsor, New Glasgow and Arichat
- Increased the housing income limits for the Provincial Housing Emergency Repair and Senior Citizens Assistance programs. As a result approximately 200 more seniors and low-income families in Nova Scotia qualified for these programs
- Invested more than $15 million to help lower-income Nova Scotians make emergency health and safety-related repairs to their homes. This investment helped approximately 2,100 households, of which 900 were seniors
- Renewed its commitment to the Housing Support Worker program. Through this program hundreds of individuals who experienced homelessness were transitioned into more permanent housing.

Housing Strategy

In November 2012, the department engaged Nova Scotians in the development of the province's first comprehensive, long-term strategy for housing. More than 500 Nova Scotians, including non-profit and community organizations, participated in the consultation process. During the consultation phase, the department also met with key housing partners, the Acadian community, persons with disabilities, and off-reserve First Nations groups.

During this process, it was confirmed that the department is on the right track in the creation of the Housing Strategy - one that stresses affordability, choice, partnership and community building. The consultation document highlighted the following five key components:

- Fostering healthy, vibrant and diverse communities;
- Ensuring affordable housing choices for owners and renters;
- Providing paths to equity and home ownership;
- Building partnerships: drawing on the strengths of Nova Scotia's local communities, business and governments; and
- Independence and Dignity: Serving seniors, the disabled and vulnerable Nova Scotians.

In 2012-2013, Government approved the first Provincial Housing Strategy for launch in May of 2013. The Housing Strategy will serve as the vehicle to improve not only the quality and affordability of housing, but equally as important, the educational, social, health and economic determinants for individual Nova Scotians, and for the province as a whole.

Adoption Strategy

Every child needs a forever family, a home where they can find a permanent loving and secure environment in which to grow and thrive. Unfortunately some children, through no fault of their own, are in permanent care of the Minister of Community Services.

In 2012-2013, the department developed an adoption strategy to increase adoption rates in Nova Scotia. The primary focus is on children over the age of 8 years. Older children, largely between 8 and 19 years of age, tend to be in the permanent care of the Minister for longer periods of time.

The strategy focused on addressing system capacity issues, revising policies and procedures, seizing new opportunities to promote adoption, and providing appropriate staff training.

In the first year of the strategy, the department:

- Held information sessions with over 400 families waiting to adopt. Families were provided with current information about the needs of children waiting for adoption
- Revised program standards to enable an increase in the rate of adoptions of children in care
- Implemented a provincial tracking tool to actively track the progress of children through the adoption process
- Delivered specialized training to our child in care social workers on preparing children for adoption.

In 2012-2013, 122 children were placed for adoption, a 5 percent increase in comparison to the previous year.

Learning & Growth Strategy for Child Welfare Staff

Child Welfare serves approximately 21,000 children and their families each year through a variety of programs such as child protection, foster care, adoption, and residential services.

In 2012-2013, to ensure child welfare staff are trained to deal with a variety of challenging issues and circumstances, the department developed and implemented a Learning and Growth Strategy. In year one of the strategy, approximately 200 staff from across the province participated in training on a variety of issues including how best to prepare children for adoption, how to work with families that experience intimate partner violence, and best practices on preparing youth for successful adulthood.

Implement a Restorative Practice Approach

A restorative practice approach operates from the premise that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *for* them.

In 2012-2013, the department's commitment to becoming a restorative organization began with its employees and the explicit development and enhancement of relationships between employees. More specifically, the department formalized its commitment to becoming restorative by:

- Assigning the responsibility of coordinating restorative practices within the department to a senior departmental official
- Providing restorative practices training to over 200 employees from the executive level to the front line staff level

- Implementing a restorative approach to address incidents of harm within the workplace as a means of obtaining resolution
- Developing an intranet website to support employees in bringing a restorative approach to their workplace.

Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means

Performance and Accountability

In 2012-2013, the department established an outcome-based accountability framework. The framework includes a clearly defined strategic direction with measurable outcomes and targets for all major program areas. To track our performance and progress, the department implemented several new tracking and reporting processes.

5.0 Performance Measures

This section provides detailed information on the Department of Community Services' progress against the outcomes and targets identified in the *2012-2013 Statement of Mandate*.

Increased number of Nova Scotians living independent of income assistance

1. Measure: Number and Percent of Nova Scotians Living in Poverty

This measure represents the number and percentage of Nova Scotians whose total household income falls below a defined low-income threshold. The department uses *Statistics Canada* after-tax low-income cut-off (After-Tax LICO) to track poverty in Nova Scotia.

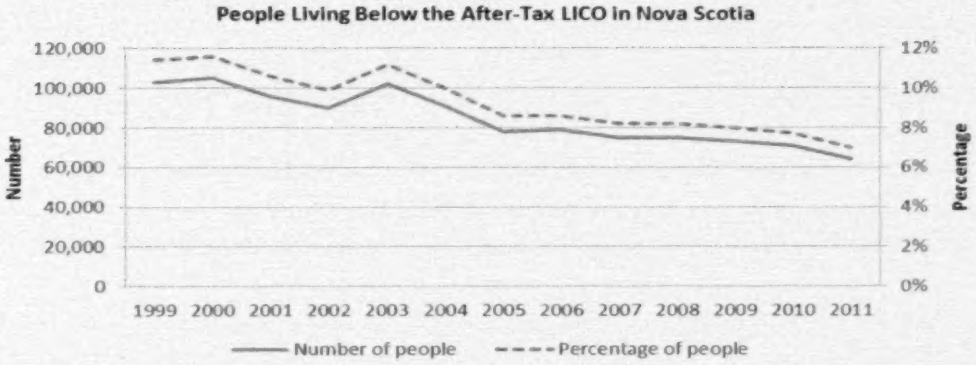
Community Size / Family Size	Rural Area	Urban under 30,000	Urban 30,000-99,999	Urban 100,000-499,999	Urban
1 person	$12,629	$14,454	$16,124	$16,328	$19,307
2 persons	$15,371	$17,592	$19,625	$19,872	$23,498
3 persons	$19,141	$21,905	$24,437	$24,745	$29,260
4 persons	$23,879	$27,329	$30,487	$30,871	$36,504
5 persons	$27,192	$31,120	$34,717	$35,154	$41,567
Source: Statistics Canada, *Low income cut-offs before and after tax by community and family size, 2011,* Table No. 202-0801.					

What does this measure tell us?

A reduction in the number and percentage of people with incomes below the after-tax LICO is an indication that more people have income to spend on necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing, and that fewer need to depend on government transfer programs like Income Assistance.

Where are we now?

The latest Statistics Canada information indicates in 2011, the number of persons living in low-income in Nova Scotia declined from 71,000 in 2010 to 64,000 in 2011[1]. The prevalence of persons living in low-income also declined, from 7.7 percent to 7.0 percent, the lowest on record since 1976 (the first year for which data is available).



Some measures taken by Government in 2012-2013, to help address the challenges low-income Nova Scotians face included:

- Increasing the Income Assistance Personal Allowance by $9 per month
- Increasing the annual Poverty Reduction Credit by over 20 percent to $250
- Increasing the Affordable Living Tax Credit to $255 for an individual adult and to $60 for a dependent child.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Our goal is to increase the number of Nova Scotians living independently of Income Assistance.

[1] Statistics Canada, "Income of Canadians, 2011", CANSIM Table 202-0802.

In 2013-2014, the department will continue to work towards the development of an outcome focused ESIA program that supports clients to gain employment as soon as possible and stay employed. The initial focus is on recipients who have strong potential for employment success, with a goal of helping them to connect to the labour market and break their cycle of poverty.

2. Measure: Number and Percentage of Children Living in Poverty

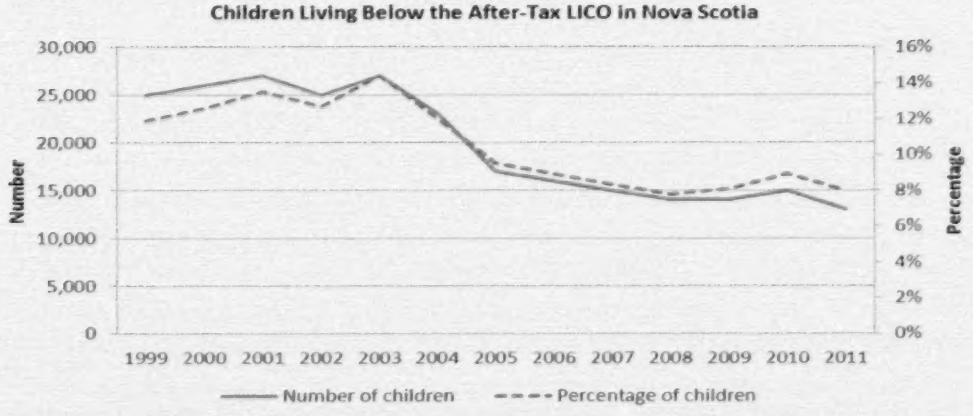
This measure represents the number and percentage of Nova Scotia children who live in households where the total household income falls below a defined low-income threshold. The Department uses the after-tax low-income cut-off (After-Tax LICO) to track child poverty in Nova Scotia.

What does this measure tell us?

A reduction in the number or percentage of children who live in households with incomes below the after-tax LICO is an indication that fewer children have to live without necessities such as nutritious food, proper shelter, and clothing.

Where are we now?

The latest Statistics Canada information indicates in 2011, the number of children living in low-income dropped from 15,000 to 13,000, and the prevalence was also decreased, from 8.9 percent to 8.0 percent in comparison to the previous year[2].



[2] Statistics Canada, "Income of Canadians, 2011", CANSIM Table 202-0802.

In 2012-2013, to improve the outcomes of children, the department has:

- Enhanced the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, enabling an additional 2,000 families to qualify, and providing over 20,000 families an average annual increase of at least 5 percent; the majority of families seeing an increase of 9 percent, or more
- Assessed the educational needs of the children in each of our 23 child welfare residential facilities
- Delivered training to 200 child welfare staff on *Preparing Youth for Successful Adulthood*
- Invested $614,000 to fund the implementation of the Youth Outreach program. In the first year, help was provided to approximately 1,000 at-risk-youth
- Worked with the Department of Education to improve access to social support programs for youth and their families through the SchoolsPlus program.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The goal is to improve the educational, justice, health, social and economic determinants of the children.

In 2013-2014, the department will continue to partner with community organizations including family resource centres, youth outreach programs, Parenting Journey, and Boys and Girls Clubs as an integral part of the social safety net for vulnerable children, youth and their families.

The department will also develop and test a pilot program for youth in permanent care of the Minister, who require additional encouragement and support to complete their high school education and pursue further career development opportunities.

3. Measure: Average Monthly Beneficiaries as a Percentage of the Population

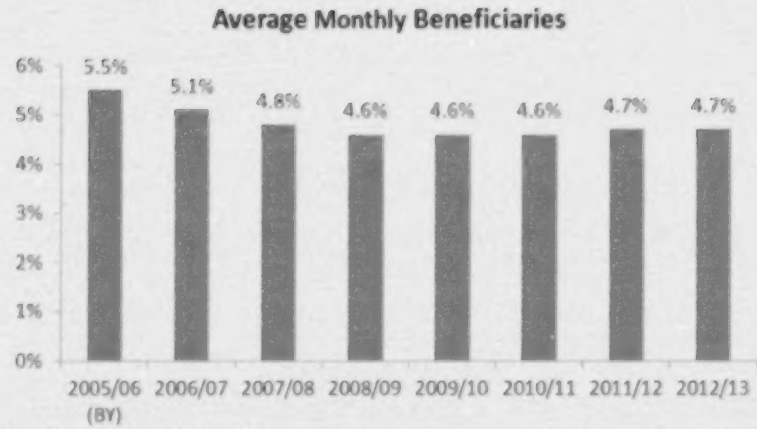
The average number of people on the department's income assistance caseload each fiscal year as a percentage of Nova Scotia's population represents the percentage of low-income households dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs.

What does this measure tell us?

A reduction in the number of persons dependent on income assistance is an indication of better outcomes for low-income people. It represents the number of persons who have moved to the work force or are making the transition into the work force.

Where are we now?

For the second year in a row, 4.7 percent of Nova Scotia's population was dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs. Although the goal of helping 3,000 recipients reach independence was not achieved, many successful outcomes were realized.



In 2012-2013, the number clients who participated in employment services increased by 16 percent, and the number of cases that reported wage income increased by 8.8 percent indicating an increased movement towards independence.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Our goal is to increase the number of Nova Scotians living independently of income assistance. Employment provides the best opportunity for individuals to attain self-sufficiency and exit from poverty. As such, the department will ensure:

- Our programs and services serve as a bridge to a better life
- People, including those with disabilities, have a chance to take advantage of job opportunities and that they are not penalized for trying
- Application processes are as simple as possible, so more time is being spent on what really counts – finding the right help for people.

4. Measure: Percentage of Income Assistance Recipients with Wage Income

Employment Support Services helps eligible people on income assistance to become more self-sufficient. Involvement in employment activities such as volunteer or part-time work or career planning not only reduces reliance on income assistance but also enables individuals and families to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance and independence.

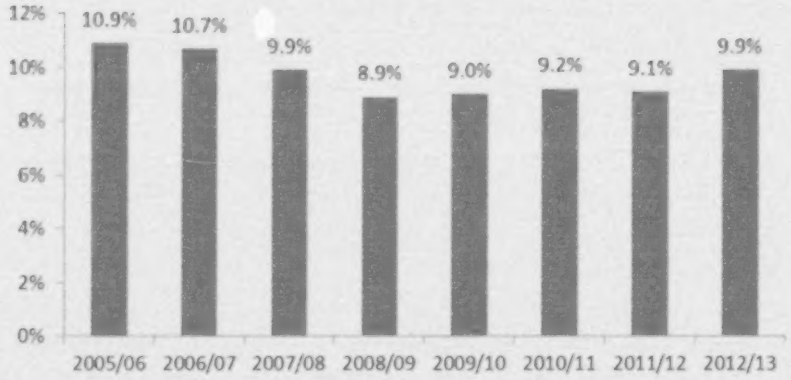
What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients with wage income. Included in this calculation are individuals who are still receiving income assistance at a reduced amount because their earned wages are not sufficient to completely exit the program.

Where are we now?

In 2012-2013, 9.9 percent of income assistance recipients had wage income. This represents an increase of 8.8 percent or 350 more recipients with wage income, but falls short of the target of 1,500.

Income Assistance Recipients with Wage Income



The department offers a variety of programs, such as Return to Work Projects, Targeted Wage Subsidy programs and Work Activity projects, with the goal of linking income assistance recipients to employment opportunities. As well, the department implemented a new screening process to better identify individuals who have strong potential for employment. As a result, more clients have attached the labour market and/or have access the supports they need to help them prepare for employment.

Where do we want to be in the future?

As the department moves forward with ESIA transformation, it is our goal to increase the number of Nova Scotians living independently of income assistance. An increased percentage of income assistance recipients with wage income is an indicator of an increased movement to labour market attachment and therefore movement towards a greater degree of self-reliance and independence.

In 2013-2014, the department will continue to work towards the development of an outcome focused program that supports clients to gain employment as soon as possible and stay employed.

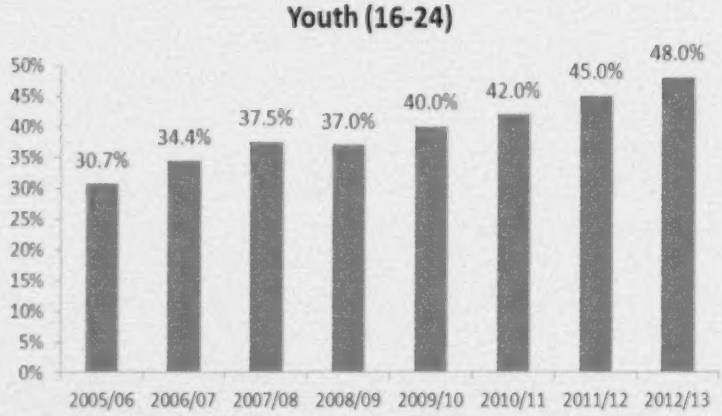
5. Measure: Youth Assisted to Enhance Employability

People who establish dependency patterns early in life often have greater difficulty establishing long-term self-sufficiency. The department is striving to ensure that youth in financial need have opportunities to transition to employment and self-reliance.

What does this measure tell us?

Participation in employment support services helps individuals retain and build on the education and skills required to become and remain self-reliant. This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients ages 16 to 24, participating in employment support services.

Where are we now?



In 2012-2013, there were approximately 6,100 income assistance recipients between the ages of 16 to 24. Of these, 48 percent participated in skills development, education, and employment support services. This exceeds the 2013-2014 target of 45 percent and marks the highest participation rate in comparison to the previous nine years. This is the result of an enhanced screening at intake and employment related projects specifically targeted at youth.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The department is striving to ensure that the youth in our income assistance program have an opportunity to participate in educational, training and employment programs. In 2013-2014, the department will continue offer employment related projects specifically to youth.

Improved health and diversity of people living in affordable and public housing

In spring of 2013, Government approved the first provincial Housing Strategy. As such, all future reporting will be through the new Housing Nova Scotia organization.

1. Measure: Core Housing Need

Core housing need represents households that fall below adequacy, suitability or affordability standards.

What does the measure tell us?

Recognizing that adequate and affordable housing is essential for the well-being of Nova Scotians, the department provides a suite of housing programs to address the various needs of low and moderate income Nova Scotians and their families.

This measure indicates the number and percentage of households unable to access acceptable housing.

Where are we now?

The most recent Statistics Canada data below indicates that in 2006, 43,800 households, representing 12.1 percent of all Nova Scotia households fell below adequacy, suitability or affordability standards.

Atlantic Comparisons - Proportion of Households in Core Housing Need, 2006			
	Total	**Renters**	**Owners**
New Brunswick	10.3%	25.4%	5.7%
Nova Scotia	**12.1%**	**29.1%**	**5.9%**
Prince Edward Island	12.6%	28.4%	7.2%
Newfoundland	14.2%	34.5%	9.0%
Canada	12.7%	27.2%	6.3%

In November 2012, the department engaged Nova Scotians in the development the province's first comprehensive, long-term strategy for housing - one that stresses affordability, choice, partnership and community building.

Informed by the consultation, the first provincial Housing Strategy was approved by Government for launch in May of 2013. The Housing Strategy will serve as the vehicle to improve the quality and affordability of housing over the next ten years.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The goal is to ensure that Nova Scotians can find the housing choice that's right for them and their families, at a price they can afford, in a healthy vibrant community that offers the services, supports and opportunities they need.

Over the next ten years, the Province will invest $500 million in new and enhanced affordable housing projects and programs. This investment will be part of the province's Housing Strategy.

2. Measure: Co-operative Housing Ranking

Co-operative housing plays an important role in connecting low-income Nova Scotians with safe, affordable housing. Approximately 1,700 self-contained rental dwelling units are provided through 69 co-operative housing organizations across the province.

Based on physical condition of units, financial operations, and board governance, the Department is able to determine the number of co-operative organizations "in difficulty".

What does the measure tell us?

Healthy co-operatives mean greater stability and availability of housing options for low-income Nova Scotians. This measure indicates the percentage of co-operative housing organizations that move from a default position "project in difficulty" to a healthy, functioning cooperative - in terms of financial, democratic and physical condition.

Where are we now?

Throughout the year, the department worked with our cooperative housing partners to address physical, financial and governance issues. In 2012-2013, 82.6 percent of cooperatives were deemed healthy, representing a significant improvement in comparison to the previous year of 72 percent.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Co-operative housing will continue to play an important role in connecting low-income Nova Scotians with safe, affordable housing. In addition, Housing Nova Scotia will be exploring innovative housing options and programs that could include expanding into building cooperatives as another housing option for Nova Scotians.

3. Measure: Households Assisted with Health and Safety Repairs

The department's housing repair programs enable lower income households to make emergency, health, and safety-related repairs to their homes.

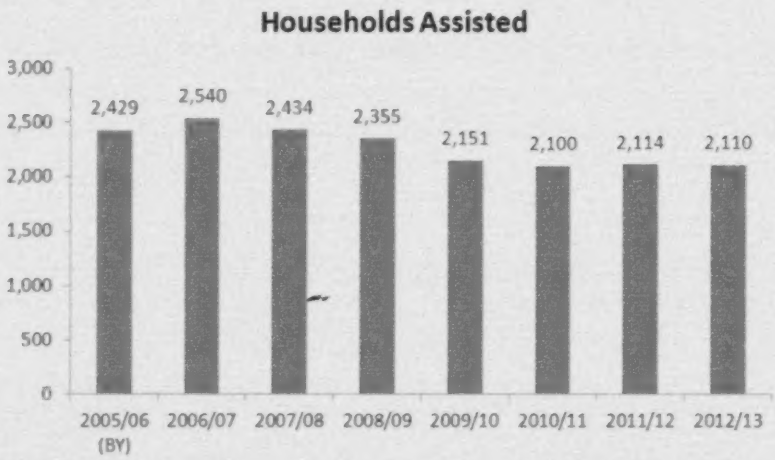
What does the measure tell us?

Preserving, in good condition, existing affordable housing occupied by low-income households and modifying and adapting homes so that low-income seniors and persons with disabilities can live independently is essential for their well-being, the well-being of their families, and for the development of sustainable communities.

This measure indicates the number of households the department assists each year with health and safety related home repairs. Financial assistance is provided in the form of grants, loans, and forgivable loans.

Where are we now?

In 2012-2013, the department invested over $15.8 million to help 2,110 households undertake needed health and safety repairs /adaptations. This means that 2,110 low-income households have access to better, healthier and safer homes.



In 2010-2011, the maximum amount of assistance available under the provincial housing repair programs was increased from $5,000 to $6,500 providing deeper coverage but fewer grants. In consideration of this, the department's target has been to assist 2,000 households per year.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The ability to cost-effectively support seniors and persons with disabilities will become increasingly important as the population ages. To maintain the sustainability of the system, we need to enable Nova Scotia's seniors and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes connected to their families, friends and neighbours.

Starting in 2013-2014, as part of the new Housing Strategy, Nova Scotia's seniors and those with disabilities who wish to participate and remain in their homes and communities will have access to an increased range of home adaption and renovation options.

Measure: Public Housing Vacancy Rate

What does the measure tell us?

Public housing vacancy rate is a measure of the department's capacity to accommodate the demand for public housing.

Where are we now?

The average provincial vacancy rate in 2012-2013 was 3 percent, slightly lower than the previous year of 3.3 percent and consistent with industry standards. To achieve this result, the department identified and implemented changes to internal processes, systems and standards to ensure that vacant units are available to rent in a timely manner.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Province, in partnership with the private and not-for-profit sectors, will move away from stand-alone public housing projects to the development of mixed-income and mixed-tenure communities. Each of these projects will have a range of income levels, ownership conditions and family types. In particular, each project will include affordable housing for singles, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

Improved educational, justice, health, social and economic determinants of children in care and children of income assistance recipients

1. Measure: Number of Children in Care Placed for Adoption

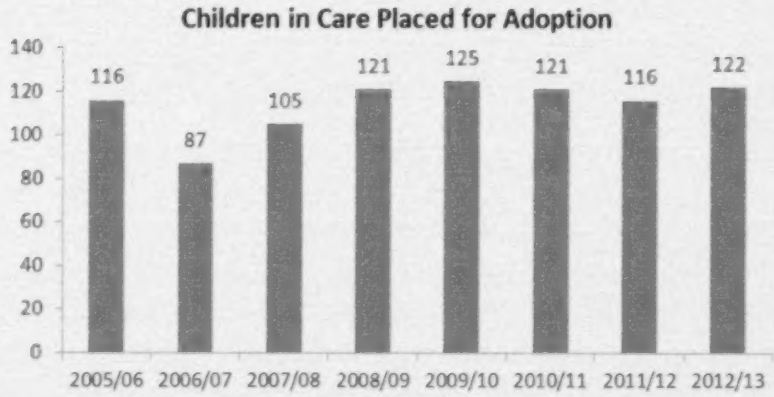
The department is responsible for Nova Scotian children when they cannot be safely and securely cared for by their own families. Where a child is in the department's permanent care and legally free for adoption, it is in the child's best interest to be placed for adoption as quickly as possible. Research has shown that a secure stable family environment is an important factor in healthy child development.

What does this measure tell us?

This measure reports on the number of children in the department's care that are placed for adoption. The number includes adoptions that have not yet been finalized.

Where are we now?

In 2012-2013, the department developed an adoption strategy to increase adoption rates in Nova Scotia. The primary focus is on children over the age of 8 years. Older children, largely between 8 and 19 years of age, tend to be in the permanent care of the Minister for longer periods of time.



The strategy focuses on addressing system capacity issues, revising policies and procedures, seizing new opportunities to promote adoption, and providing appropriate staff training. In year one of the strategy, the number of adoptions increased by 5 percent in comparison to the previous year.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Assuring children have a stable family environment in which to grow and prosper is still a priority for the department. As such, the department will continue to focus on increasing the rate of adoption through the implementation of a series of improvements including specialized training for staff, making the very best use of staff resources, implementing new tools to increase the system's capacity, tracking both children in care and waiting families, and streamlining and simplifying processes.

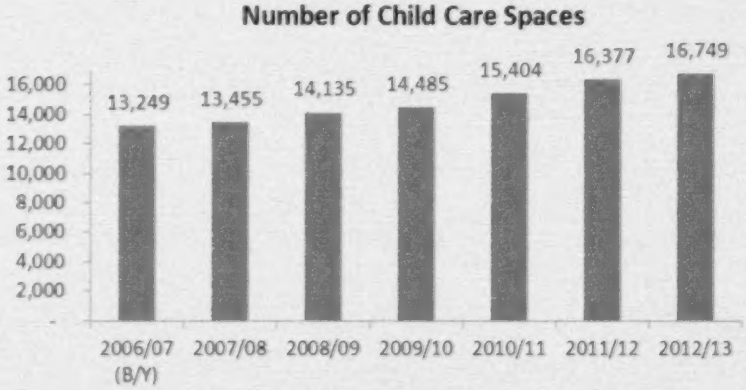
2. Measure: Number of Child Care Spaces

Quality child care offers an ongoing opportunity for children's learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child's well-being. The availability of child care is also an important resource for parents to enter and remain in the labour force, or to access employment training.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of licensed child care spaces is a measure of the department's ongoing commitment to the provision of programs that support the development needs of young children.

Where are we now?



In 2012-2013, the department provided operational funding for an additional 372 licensed child care spaces, bringing the total number of spaces up to 16,749.

Following the release of *Giving Children the Best Start – The Early Years Discussion Paper*, a project team consisting of staff from the departments of Community Services, Education and Health and Wellness joined, with input from government and multi-sector stakeholders, to lead the creation of policy direction and strategy for the early years. Consultations were held in June and July 2012 to obtain feedback and included focus groups with parents, consultation sessions, cross-governmental discussions, written submissions and an online survey.

Recommendations that arose from the consultation will inform the direction of Early Years policy direction and strategies for 2013-2014.

Where do we want to be in the future?

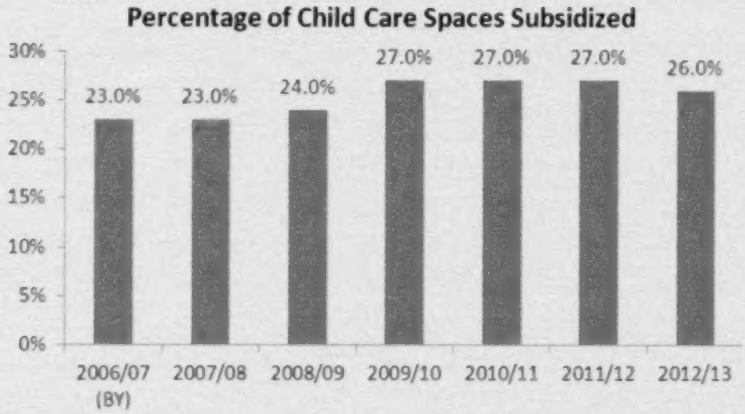
Based on the recommendations received in the *Early Years Consultation Report*, March 2012 marked the renewal of Governments' focus on children and youth through the creation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. The department will bring together dedicated staff from Education, Community Services, and Health and Wellness who oversee more than 200 programs and services such as child care and early intervention. The new Early Years branch will improve the way the province supports children and their families. Nova Scotia's families will receive more coordinated and accessible support in the earliest years of their children's lives, from before birth to age six.

3. Measure: Child Care Subsidies

Availability of affordable child care is a critical resource to low and moderate income families.

What does this measure tell us?

The percentage of subsidized spaces is a measure of the department's ability to support eligible families with their child care costs.



Where are we now?

In 2012-2013, more than $18 million was invested in the child care subsidy program, helping 5,500 families.

Although the number of subsidies spaces remained the same as the previous year at 4,427, the percentage of child care spaces subsidized fell slightly due to the increased in the number of licensed child care spaces. As of March 2013, there were no families on the waitlist for the child care subsidy program.

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2013-2014, through the Early Years project, Government is moving toward a more innovative and integrated approach to early childhood development. The new Department of Education and Early Childhood Development will bring together dedicated staff from Education, Community Services, and Health and Wellness who oversee more than 200 programs and services such as child care and early intervention.

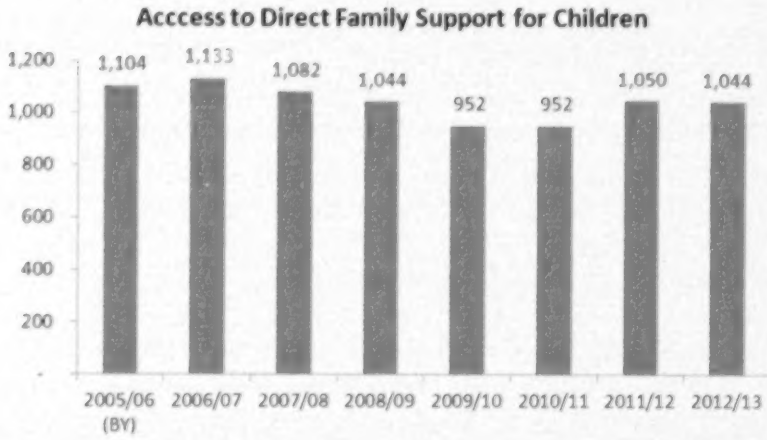
4. Measure: Access to the Direct Family Support for Children

The funding offered through the Direct Family Support program enables families to support children with a disability at home, preventing the need for an out-of-home placement.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of children accessing the direct family support program demonstrates progress towards improving the continuum of residential support options available to children with disabilities.

Where are we now?



In 2012-2013, 1,044 children received support through the Direct Family Support, falling short of the target of 1,090 placements.

In 2012-2013, the department introduced a new program called Enhanced Family Support for Children (EFSC). This program provides funding to assist families to support their child at home when their child's care and support needs are considered extremely challenging and they require comprehensive, highly structured and skilled forms of support and intervention. Under the new EFSC program, families may receive up to $1,600/month in additional funding to maintain a family member in the home.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Opportunities and options are important for those with disabilities and their families. The department will continue to work with our partners and members of the disability community to build on our existing services and to identify creative solutions to enable more people to transition to community living.

Maximize client independence, self-reliance and improve social inclusion

1. Measure: Number of Clients Served by Adult Service Centres

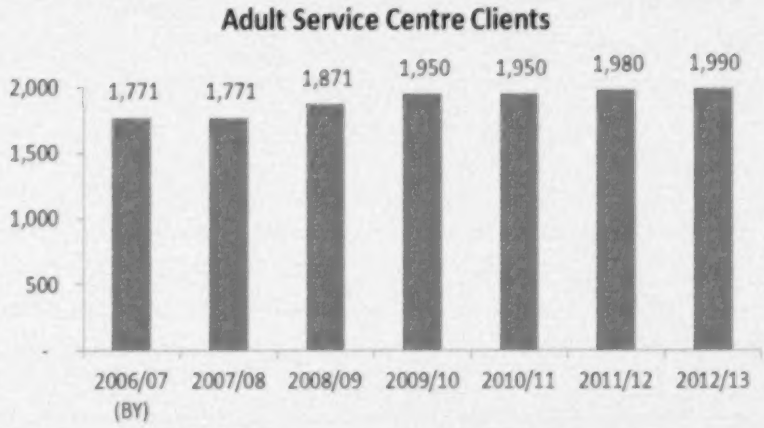
Adult Service Centres provide employment, skills training and day program opportunities for adults with disabilities in communities across Nova Scotia.

What does this measure tell us?

The number of clients served by Adult Service Centres is a measure of the department's ability to provide access to programs that enhance the quality of life and employability of adults with disabilities.

Where are we now?

In 2012-2013, the department invested almost $15 million in 30 Adult Service Centres serving 1,990 persons with disabilities, falling only slightly short of the target of 2,000 participants.



Where do we want to be in the future?

Adult Service Centre programs provide an important service to individuals with special needs. In 2013-2014 the department, with the assistance of the Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion in Society (IRIS) will be initiating a key stakeholder engagement process. It is through this engagement process that a roadmap for Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) program transformation will be drafted in partnership with community and government stakeholders.

2. Measure: Number of SPD Licensed Facilities with Escalated Non-Compliance

What does this measure tell us?

Escalated non-compliance occurs when a facility has an outstanding violation that has not been corrected within a specified time. The number of SPD Licensed Facilities with escalated non-compliance is a measure of the safety of SPD licensed facilities and their ability to meet the requirements established in the *Homes for Special Care Act* and *Regulations*.

Where are we now?

2011-2012 was the first year for this measure. As such, data was not yet available when the 30 percent target was established. In 2012-2013, only 10.7 percent of licensed facilities had an escalated violation. This is encouraging and the benchmark will be reset at 10 percent.

The department through inspections and technical assistance, increased the level of support to facility operators to assist them in coming into compliance with the licensing requirements. Licensing Services also implemented an IT system to better track, monitor and report on compliance.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Through on-going licensing, monitoring and enforcement, the department will continue to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of vulnerable Nova Scotians in out-of-home care. To support this work, the department is focusing on information and awareness to further support facility operators in achieving compliance.

3. Measure: Licensing Turnaround Time

What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of the department's licenses that meet the 10 day service standard. It is a measure of the performance and efficiency of the Licensing Services unit.

Where are we now?

In 2012-2013, 86 percent of all applications received were processed within 10 days, a decrease of 6.4 percent from the previous year, and short of the target of 95 percent. However, the department continues exceeds the Government standard which requires 80 percent of all government licenses, permits, and approvals processed in 10 business days or less.

In 2012-2013, a new IT system was implemented. During the transition period to the new system, there were some challenges that resulted in a larger number of applications not meeting the 10-day standard.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The department will continue to analyze information obtained from the Amanda system to better understand where efficiencies can be gained and implement the necessary improvements to ensure the target of 95 percent or higher is re-established and maintained.

6.0 Financial Results

Department of Community Services (DCS) Estimated & Actual Expenditures For the Year Ending March 31, 2013 Operational Area	Estimate 2012-2013 ($thousands)	Actual 2012-2013 ($thousands)	Variance	Notes
Gross Departmental Expenses:				
Senior Management	1,589	1,672	(83)	
Corporate Services Unit	9,048	8,213	835	1
Policy and Information Management	8,846	8,041	805	2
Field Offices	14,110	13,497	613	3
Services for Persons with Disabilities	260,557	276,090	(15,533)	4
Family and Children's Services	188,803	187,020	1,783	5
Housing Services	104,729	37,394	67,335	6
Employment Support & Income Assistance	381,234	400,940	(19,706)	7
Housing Authority and Property Operations	9,008	8,957	51	
Total Departmental Expenses	977,924	941,824	36,100	
Fees and Other Charges	(431)	(462)	31	
Ordinary Recoveries	(100,038)	(27,733)	(72,304)	8
TCA Purchase Requirements	4,100	215	(3,985)	9
Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)	1,662	1,668	(6)	

Notes to the Estimated & Actual Expenditures for the Year Ending March 31, 2013

1. Under spent as a result of staff vacancies, and lower than planned external consulting and IT data communications costs.
2. Under spent as a result of savings from staff vacancies and lower than planned professional services costs.
3. Savings resulted from delays in planned building alterations and maintenance as well as lower than expected staff training costs.
4. Over spent primarily due to the government wide adoption of PSAB 3410 which resulted in the expensing of prepayments in the current fiscal year. See also note 10.
5. Under spent due to delay in start-up of Wood Street Level III facility. Delays in the implementation of components of the federally funded Early Learning and Child Care plan likewise contributed to the under expenditure. Federal funds deferred are available to offset expenditures in future year(s).
6. Lower than budget due primarily to the adoption of the OAG's recommendation to reflect only the Province's share of expenses of the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation (NSHDC). In contrast, the Estimate reflected majority of the Housing program expenses funded from other sources.
7. Over spent primarily due to government wide adoption of PSAB 3410. See also note 10.
8. The variance is primarily due to the adoption of the OAG's recommendation to reflect only the Province's share of revenues of the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation (NSHDC).
9. A $4 million TCA approval for the Housing Administration Project should have been included under NSHDC, and not DCS.
10. The province adopted Section PS 3410 – Government Transfers effective April 1, 2012. This Section revises and replaces the former Section PS 3410 – Government Transfers and establishes standards on how to account for and report government transfers to individuals, organizations, and other governments from both a transferring government and a recipient government perspective. For the transferor, the new standard specifically defines and clarifies the terms "authorization" and "eligibility criteria". A transferring government is no longer able to recognize any type of transfer as an asset regardless of whether they are pre-flowed or not. The province elected to adopt this revised Section on a prospective basis for the year ended March 31, 2013 and as a result expenses not budgeted were recognized in 2012-13. The total effect of PSAB 3410 in 2012-13 is $31.4 million.